

CALENDAR OF THE EGYPTIAN
FARMER BOOK in

first day of the first month Thoth was theoretically supposed to date from the heliacal rising of the bright star, and in all probability it really did so when the official or civil year of three hundred and sixty-five days was first instituted. But the miscalculation which has been already explained¹ had the effect of making the star to shift its place in the calendar by one day in four years. Thus if Sirius rose on the first of Thoth in one year, It would rise on the second of Thoth four years afterwards, on the third of Thoth eight years afterwards, and so on until after the lapse of a Siriatic or Sothic period of fourteen hundred and sixty solar years the first of Thoth again coincided with the heliacal rising of Sirius.² This observation of the gradual displacement of

mann und J. Partsch,
Physikalische Geographic von Griechenland (Breslau, 1885), pp. 96 sqq. On the top of Mount Pelion in Thessaly there was a sanctuary of Zeus, where sacrifices were offered at the rising of Sirius, in the height of the summer, by men of rank, who were chosen by the priest and wore fresh sheep-skins. See [Dicaearchus,] "Descriptio Graeciae," *Geographi Graeci Minores*, ed. C. Müller, i. 107; *Historicorum Graecorum Fragmata*, ed. C. Müller, ii. 262.
¹ Above, pp. 24 seq.
² We know from Censorinus (*De die natali*, xxi. 10) that the first of Thoth coincided with the heliacal rising of Sirius on July 20 (Julian calendar) in the year 139 A.D. Hence

reckoning backwards by Sothic periods of 1460 solar years we may infer that Sirius rose on July 20th (Julian calendar) in the years 1321 B.C., 2781 B.C., and 4241 B.C.; and accordingly that the civil or vague Egyptian year of 365 days was instituted in one of these years. In favour of supposing that it was instituted either in 2781 B.C. or 4241 B.C., it maybe said that in both these years the rising of Sirius nearly coincided with the summer solstice and the rising of the Nile; whereas in the year 1321 B.C. the summer solstice, and with it the rising of the Nile, fell nineteen days before the rising of Sirius and the first of Thoth. Now when we

consider the close causal connexion

which the Egyptians traced between the rising of Sirius and the rising of the Nile, it seems probable that they started the new calendar on the first of Thoth in a year in which the two natural phenomena coincided rather than in one in which they diverged from each other by nineteen days. Prof. Ed. Meyer decides in favour of the year 4241 B.C. as the date of the introduction of the Egyptian calendar on the ground that the calendar was already well known in the Old Kingdom. See L. Ideler, *op. cit. i. 125 sqq.*; F. K. Ginzel, *op. cit. i. 192 sqq.* Ed. Meyer, *< Nachträge zur ägyptischen Chronologie," Abhandlungm der konigl. Preuss. Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1907* (Berlin, 1908), pp. II sq. ; *id. Geschichte des Altertums** i. 2. pp. 28 sqq.) 98 sqq. When the fixed Alexandrian year was introduced in 30 B.C. (see above, pp. 27 sq.) the first of Thoth fell on August 29, which accordingly was thenceforth reckoned the first day of the year in the Alexandrian calendar. See L. Ideler, *op. cit. i. 153 sqq.* The period of 1460 solar or 1461 movable Egyptian years was variously called a Sothic period (Clement of Alexandria, *Strom*, i. 21. 136, p. 401 ed. Potter), a Canicular year (from *Canicula*) "the Dog-star," that is, Sirius), a heliacal year, and a year of God (Censorinus, *De die natali*, xviii. 10). But there is no evidence or probability that the